

LITTLE FARCES FOR THE FORCES.

V.—SOLDIERS OF "CHARACTER."

Waiting-room in barracks near Trafalgar Square. Colonels SMITH, JONES and ROBINSON in undress uniform are standing by the fireplace and chatting. All three have their eyes on the door which leads into the recruiting officer's sanctum.

Colonel Jones. I intend to ask our county Member to press the Government to place all the recruiting in the hands of a first-class servants' agency, for some of the characters brought by the recruits who have been sent to my Regiment lately have been anything but satisfactory.

Colonel Smith. Quite so. I can assure you that lads have been sent to me with recommendations on which my wife says she would not engage an under footman.

Colonel Robinson. And the airs a recruit with a first-class character gives himself! I had a letter only the other day from a boy who said that he was thinking of changing his situation, and wanted to know if I allowed every Sunday out in my Regiment and whether I gave fish for dinner.

Colonel Jones. I had a lad before me the other day, a very smart young fellow, who objected to be attested for more than twenty-four months, because he made a point of never remaining more than two years in one situation.

Colonel Robinson. And the difficulty of obtaining the wretches! I always go personally to interview whoever it is who gives the reference for any recruit whom I am thinking of taking, and I do assure you the lies that I am sometimes told, the subterfuges that are resorted to, sooner than give a really straightforward answer!

Colonel Jones. It's heartbreaking, that's what it is.

Colonel Smith. I often say to my wife that I believe we shall come to taking Chinamen as recruits before long, owing to the airs and graces the young people of the lower classes with characters now-a-days give themselves. All the recruits of one of my companies threatened the other day not to do any drill and to report me to the Secretary of State for War because I gave them Australian mutton two days running, and because they thought the table beer—which I drink myself, so please you—was thin.

Colonel Robinson. And they ask for jam with their tea, and threaten to report me to the Domestic Servants' Union if they don't get it. Tyranny, I call it!

Colonel Jones. I often say I'd sooner



Tommy (mysteriously). "I SHALL HAVE LOTS OF CAKE THIS SUMMER, ALL FOR MYSELF."

Mother. "OH! HAS AUNTIE PROMISED YOU SOME?"

Tommy (with withering scorn). "NO. I'VE PLANTED A SEED-CAKE IN THE GARDEN!"

do all the work of my Battalion myself rather than be bothered with my fine gentlemen's requirements and complaints.

Colonel Smith. At first I stood out against taking any youth who couldn't show an excellent character from two previous situations, but I had to give up being so particular.

Colonel Robinson. I advertise that there are billiard tables in all my barrack-rooms, concerts after dinner on Saturdays, and a tape machine with the latest racing results at the Quarter Guard, but even these attractions do not bring me quite first-class recruits.

[The door opens and a Staff Sergeant appears with a paper in his hand.]

The Sergeant. Beg pardon, Sirs. We have two great big country fellows who say they've run away from unkind masters, a sailor who declares that he's

tired of the sea, five strapping lads who've never held any situation, and a brewer's man who wants to lead a reformed life.

The Colonels. Not a man with a character amongst them! The service is going to the dogs.

[Exeunt in anger.]

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Billiad. By Col. W. F. CODY, author of "The Codssey."

How is Mrs. De La Rey? By the Rt. Hon. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., author of "Lines to an Aasvogel," etc.

Glorious Beer! By the Rt. Hon. A. J. BALFOUR, M.P., author of "Salus Publici Suprema Lex."

The Beauty of Resignation. By President CASTRO, author of "Forgive Us Our Debts," and other moral tales.

THE POLITE ART: A REVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

"FAITHFULLY to reproduce the style of conversation employed by our Nobility has never been an easy task for the makers of novels and "turnovers." Strangely elusive, it seems to escape crystallisation. From the many attempts to fix a type of dialogue suited for the Table or the Park we select just three examples:—

(1) There is the famous fragment, still enjoying a deserved anonymity, which runs as follows:—

"H—I!" said the Countess, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation."

This we may at once discard as contrary to popular prejudice.

(2) There are the dialogues composed by a brilliant young writer in an esteemed evening contemporary. They are instinct with studied intellectual refinement, relieved by scintillations of sparkling paradox. They seem almost too good to be true.

(3) From Mr. COSMO HAMILTON's new book, *The Danger of Innocence*, in which we have the results of a life-study of the manners of our Best Set, we quote a slight but effective passage out of a dialogue between the Duchess of SURREY and Lord ERSOM:—

"Wot O, ERFF!" she cried . . .

"Pip-pip, Duch!" replied ERSOM."

This bears the stamp of truth. The style is easy without being too vulgar: natural and yet not profane.

Taught by these inspired instances what to accept and what to avoid, we propose to give an impression of a common or Rotten Row dialogue between two ordinary members of the Nobility, showing how, at a pinch, they can rise to the responsibilities of their station, and adapt themselves to the language expected of them by the better class of reader:—

The Earl (replacing his hat). Got 'em all on this time, what?

The Duchess (recovering from a stiffish bow). What an impossible toque! And she pads her hips, too. Can't think what induces MORTY to run her like this at Church Parade.

Earl. Must do somethin' for an honest livin', poor devil. Dessay she pays him by the hour for trottin' her out, like a Guardsman's cook.

Duchess. Talkin' of style, what do you make of these people motin' in the Park with cloth caps and all over mud?

Earl. Beastly sight, I call it. Ought to look smarter and put their fellows in livery. Been scorchin' lately?

Duchess. Runnin' down to Hardpans next week-end. Bridge party. Care to come?

Earl. Thanks. Don't mind if I do. MADGE asked me down to Sundials, but I shall chuck her. Can't stand this gardenin' rot at any price. Talks bulbs and herbaceous borders an' all that sort of truck, an' wants you to know the rotten names of things. Who's comin' to you? The GOLDSTEINS?

Duchess. Had to ask 'em because of a tip JACK wants about the *Blue Peters* combine. Woman gets on my nerves. Don't so much mind her cheatin'—you know how she squirms about on her chair when she wants it left to her—lots of 'em do that—but it's so sickenin' when she will keep on blockin' your long suit by holdin' up her high cards.

Earl. Always is a bit of a wrench with those kind of people, havin' to part. (*Dropping his voice.*) I say, BELL, see that chap hangin' round with the note-book, what? Does those Society dialogue-things in one of the evenin' prints. Shampooin' man at the *Tumtums*—bit above his place—pointed him out to me. Beastly clever an' all that.

Seems to think we talk that way ourselves—repartee an' paradox an' that. Trick of takin' an ordinary phrase an' rottin' it, don't you know. Pity to spoil his illusions. Couldn't we make an effort an' let him overhear somethin' tall. *Noblesse oblige*, what?"

Duchess (sotto voce). All right, DOLLY. Shall I give you a lead? (*Aloud, after a pause for invention.*) How exquisite the first throb of Spring, my dear ADOLPHUS. This is the acceptable time when the young man's fancy turns to thoughts of Love.

Earl (concealing the intellectual effort). In the language of sport, Love and Zero are interchangeable terms; therefore the young man's fancy undergoes, at this season, no intolerable strain. Merely to move on from Monte Carlo to Aix is not to suffer an essential development, a vital change of temperament or condition. WORDSWORTH was right about our class. The meanest cauliflower is our moral superior. It furnishes thoughts that do often lie too deep for Peers. Sometimes, my dear AMABEL, I am almost persuaded to become a vegetarian.

Duchess. And devour the object of your admiration! You find the almond-blossom a dream, and yet, my dear ADOLPHUS, you would swallow the fruit of it burnt. Even our brutal soldiery did not go so far as that with JEANNE D'ARC. They burned her, but they never actually ate her.

Earl. What did the prince of paradoxologists say? "For all men eat the thing they love." But seriously, while on the subject of Spring, I rejoice in this modern fashion of gardening as a recrudescence in the direction of Nature.

Duchess. It is certainly healthier than slumming. But the names are so much more difficult. I learn a lot of them in the books, but find it so hard to connect them with the right objects. I go up to something in a greenhouse or an alley—the Dutch kind, I mean; not the sort with *Sallies* in it—and feel like the man who said, "I know your name so well, but I can not remember your face."

Earl. Yet we owe so much to your sex for this revival. I say revival, for there was doubtless a vogue of botanising in Eden.

Duchess. True. It was EVE, you remember, who drew ADAM's attention to the smartest dessert in the garden.

Earl. And your potent influence is not confined to the introduction of novelties. Golf, cycling, Bridge, and good dining—each of these had long been a confirmed habit with our sex. It was you who made them the fashion.

Duchess. That is our gift of second sight. We re-discover the well-known. Besides, one must somehow bring the sexes together. There's our instinct for self-preservation.

Earl. A fatal instinct, my dear AMABEL. In order to bring the sexes together you must studiously keep them apart. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*

Duchess. *Mais ce n'est pas la guerre?* (*Lowering her voice.*) Was that all right, DOLLY? No? Well, do let's stop. 'I can't keep this up much longer. Gettin' a crick in my brain. Come and sample JACK's new chef.

Earl. Righto! *Teuf-teuf.*

[*Rise and exeunt, chatting easily in the aboriginal.*
O. S.

AN EXCLUSIVE HIERARCHY.—The Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company advertise in *The Cavan Weekly News* for a Station-master in the following fastidious terms:—

Must be a sound Theologian, having Divinity Testimonium . . . Applicants from the back streets, slums, or from Ballybay not attended to. None but "Upper Ten" need apply.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—*Johnny:* Yes. Tan boots with a frock-coat are still permissible, but the latest thing among the Smart Set is to have them blacked.



A DESERVING OBJECT.

RIGHT HON. C. T. RITCHIE (to himself). "POOR CHAP! I WONDER IF I COULD SPARE HIM A THREEPENNY BIT?"

["The Income-tax payer has the strongest possible claim to relief . . . The least that he is entitled to expect is a reduction of the Income-tax by threepence in the pound."—*Times*.]



LIGHT AND LEARNING.

["It is reported from Vienna that an Austrian scientist has invented a method of obtaining light from microbes."—*Daily Press*.]

WITH his usual "intelligent anticipation" of events *Mr. Punch* foresees in the future some such paragraphs as the following:—

The new Microbean Installation on the Embankment is giving great satisfaction. Of the various experimental illuminants the Influenza light has been found to be the most penetrating; its only practical defect is that it makes everything appear extremely blue.

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the relief of Mafeking the illumination of St. George's Hospital attracted universal admiration. The entire façade of the building was outlined with Mumps and Chicken-pox in fairy-lamps, while a singularly fine effect was produced by the employment of a tubercular search-light on the roof.

The alarming failure of the Bacterial system throughout the West-End last evening is said to have been the result of a deliberate outrage. It is supposed that the miscreants must have obtained admission to the central office and placed disinfectants in the generators. The affair is under investigation.

QUEER CALLINGS.

VI.—THE RESUSCITATOR.

"Yes," observed the Resuscitator, with an air of conscious pride, "mine is a noble calling. It's easy enough to discover a thing that nobody knows anything about—radium or X-rays, or any silly sort of thing like that. But to discover things the existence of which is already well known—that is another story altogether. Yet I do it almost every week."

We hinted our craving for enlightenment.

"Well," he returned, "my business is exclusively concerned with the resuscitation of standard writers. You see everybody knows about them, but nobody reads them unless they can be galvanised into vitality. That's where I come in. I write personal paragraphs about THACKERAY, or BULWER LYTTON, or WALTER SCOTT as if I had just found them out and read them for the first time—which is sometimes actually the case. Between ourselves, I never read *The Heart of Midlothian* till last week. This is what gives my work such freshness. No ordinary critic ever thinks of telling people to read THACKERAY. He takes it for granted that they do. Now I know better. I tell him that they ought to, because he was such a big-brained, sane, splendid Englishman, and had such inside knowledge of the ways of



MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY.

He. "I HOPE YOU ARE BETTER TO-DAY. I THOUGHT YOU WERE NOT LOOKING WELL WHEN I WAS AT YOUR HOUSE YESTERDAY."

She. "I HAD RATHER A BAD HEADACHE; BUT IT PASSED OFF SOON AFTER YOU LEFT!"

the aristocracy—almost as great as that of HALL CAINE. Now none of your literary critics would think of saying that, would they?"

We hastened to assure him that it was extremely unlikely that they would adopt such an attitude.

"Then take SCOTT. I admit that he wasn't a classy writer, that he wasn't well up in fashionable society, but I lay great stress on his industry, and I point out that his popularity is proved by the exclamation 'Great Scott!' and so forth, and so I arouse interest in the old chap and pave the way for cheap

reprints, and introductions and notes by Mr. ANDREW LANG or Mr. EDMUND GOSSE."

"And who are your latest discoveries?"

"Well, I've had some failures lately. I tried to discover FIELDING, but it wouldn't work. However, I shall give him another chance. Just now I am introducing STEVENSON to the penny weeklies, but it's a tough job. Too fond of fine language was STEVENSON, but I intend to persevere."

We applauded his dauntless resolution, and took our leave in a transport of admiration for this great benefactor.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

[In the competition just announced by the *Times* the first prize is a scholarship of £300 per annum tenable for four years at Oxford or Cambridge.]

PETER PEEBLES copied letters,
Perched upon an office stool,
But he simply loathed his fetters
And the head-clerk's iron rule.
City! How could PETER love it
When he had a soul above it?
There were other things to covet;
He was not a plodding mule;
He had plucked Parnassus' grasses
Growing at Extension Classes,
Classes in an Evening School.

As he mourned his sad position,
PETER PEEBLES chanced to hear
Of the *Times's* competition,
And his brow began to clear.
Though the sordid name of dollar
Moved the cultured PETER's choler,
Still 'twere sweet to be a scholar
With three hundred pounds a year;
Sweet to leave the City's vices
For the banks of Cam or Isis,
Isis with its atmosphere.

Seized with sudden wild ambitions
PETER swiftly read the "ad."
As he studied the conditions
PETER's heart grew gay and glad.
Greek or Latin, mathematics,
Modern languages or statics,
No such mental acrobatics
Bored the *Times's* undergrad;
If he meant to go to college
He might still dispense with knowledge,
Knowledge which he never had.

All the facts required by PETER
Might be found in certain tomes
Which defy this modest metre
And encumber many homes;
So he spent his utmost saving
On the books which he was craving;
People thought he was behaving
Like a maniac that foams,
When they saw the waggons shooting
Cartloads at his digs in Tooting,
Tooting where the clerklet roams.

Till the night was old he tarried
O'er the volumes big and brown,
And a tome or two he carried
As he journeyed up to town.
Other men—mere clerks and drapers—
Might devour their morning papers,
Daily Mails and such-like ha'p'ors—
PETER looked them up and down,
And amid his scouless neighbours
Still continued at his labours,
Labours which should bring renown.

For at length the *Times* rewarded
PETER, as was only right;
His the name which they recorded
As the winner of the fight.
From the City, merry-hearted

As a cricket, he departed,
Packed his weighty tomes and started
Off to Oxford, swift as light,
And at once began to hammer
At the Greek and Latin grammar,
Grammar which he could not write.

Oft he donned his coat of sable,
Oft his evening tie he tied;
Seated at his little table
Once a quarter *Smalls* he tried.
But his pains were fruitless ever;
Howso oft he might endeavour,
Came the *Smalls testamur* never,
Spite of his "complete inside,"
Till he longed to copy letters
And renew those hated fetters,
Fetters which had galled his pride.

FLOREANT AMBÆ.

[“A charwoman charged at Westminster with disorderly conduct said that she was only shouting ‘Floreat Etona,’ and the constable thought it was improper language.”—*Daily Paper*.]

Mr. Punch has received two interesting letters on this subject, which he has great pleasure in laying before his readers.

St. Peter's College,
Westminster.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—While I would be the last to characterise the expression used by a certain lady in this vicinity as *improper*, I venture to submit that in the circumstances it is hardly *decent*. You, Sir, are aware that in the neighbourhood of Westminster the word “Floreat” can have but one meaning, and can apply legitimately only to the royal and ancient foundation of which I have the honour to be an *alumnus*. While, Sir, I yield to no one in my hearty respect for the royal school situated rather higher up the river, I very much fear that the lady in exalting Eton sought to taunt Westminster. I reflect that her remark synchronised with what is now the most important rowing event of the year, the University Boat Race; I reflect too that Eton took a large and honourable part in that race and Westminster no part at all; and then I reflect that in days gone by the Eton and Westminster race was what the University race is now, the event of the year, and I cannot dismiss a suspicion that the lady was ungenerously commenting on the fact that Westminster rows no longer. I think the action of the constable much to be commended, though I heartily congratulate our sometime rivals on their deserved success. Sincerely yours,

WESTMINSTER PINK.

Eton College, Windsor.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I am wholly at a loss to comprehend the high-handed action of a certain constable in arresting

a lady for using the words “Floreat Etona,” and further in describing them as improper language. I have not the pleasure of the lady's acquaintance, but I should like to say that she shows a very proper spirit of appreciation. I would hardly like to suggest that the officer was influenced by local feeling, but it would almost seem that a Westminster policeman could not endure the mention of Eton. I sincerely trust that he was not moved to jealousy by the reflection that Eton has been able to continue rowing, while Westminster, its old rival, has been compelled to give it up and become the sleeping partner in Third Trinity. The concurrence of the Boat Race and the arrest makes this supposition possible. I think his behaviour deserving of censure, though I cannot but say that, should Westminster ever put an eight on again, Eton would be the first to welcome the circumstance.

Sincerely yours, ETON BLUE.

ITS SOLITARY MERIT.

[“This little book is well adapted to beguile the tedium of a railway journey.”—*Literary Reviews, passim*.]

How bitter is your parent's cup,
How sad, my little book, your case is!
I dreamed that men would pick you up
At all times, in all sorts of places.
Alas! though critics praise your style,
And hesitate to carp or cavil;—
You're only useful to beguile
The tedious hours of railway travel!

The well-nigh universal vogue
Of Mr. KIPLING they refuse you;
Never, when canteens disembogue,
Shall TOMMIES scamper to peruse you;
And never shall our studious boys
Within your page be furtive dippers;—
Your function's to augment the joys
Of jaded, inexpensive trippers!

The “muddled oaf” I dreamed, O book!
The scrimmage o'er, would prove your patron;
I thought you'd win, by ingle nook,
Approving smiles from maid and matron;
I hoped that dons, in cloistered shade,
Would oft the merits of your tale weigh;—
'Twas not to be—you're simply made
To ease the boredom of the railway!

Never, on summer days, shall girls,
Reclining in their hammocks, skip you;
The jewelled hands of haughty Earls,
In moated castles, will not grip you;
I weep to think of all your bright
And flashing phrases—such as one'll
Not find elsewhere—condemned to light
The darkness of a railway tunnel!



Licensed Caddy. "CARRY YOUR CLUBS, SIR?"

Jones (who has chartered a small boy at a cheap rate). "No; I'VE GOT A CADDY."

Licensed Caddy. "CARRY YOUR CADDY, SIR?"

WHO IS IT?

In the *Times* there recently appeared an advertisement so naïve in its self-complacency that it seems to deserve the immortality which only *Mr. Punch's* columns can confer. It ran as follows:—

YOUNG WRITER of exceptional ability, author of highly successful novels, articles, poems, &c., original thinker, would be glad to hear of additional remunerative LITERARY WORK. Terms moderate; views Liberal.

Who can it be? "Exceptional ability" at once suggests Mr. HALL CAINE. But then he is hardly a "Young Writer." "Highly successful poems" seems to indicate the Laureate. But then what terms could possibly be sufficiently moderate? "Original thinker" might be Mr. BERNARD SHAW. But in that case "Views Liberal" would be something of a litotes.

On the whole it seems best to give up the search for an answer to the riddle, or to reserve it for the long winter evenings. The *Times* might do worse than add it to the conundrums which all persons desiring a thousand pounds are now being invited to solve with the aid of the *Encyclopædia*

Britannica. Or it might be made the basis of a new parlour game, and hostesses, at their duller parties, might hand round papers containing advertisements, and give prizes for the best guesses as to the identity of the advertisers. A few specimens are subjoined:—

MIDDLE-AGED STATESMAN of positively gigantic capacity desires MORE ASSURED POSITION. Party shows disposition to shelve him. Terms moderate. Views Liberal.

YOUNG TORY, greatly admired by section of the Press, desires Cabinet appointment, preferably SECRETARYSHIP FOR WAR. First-rate writer and speaker.

ADMIRER DRAMATIST requires critic of fairness and integrity to take post on great daily paper. MUST WRITE ENGLISH.

DRAMATIC CRITIC desires head of admired dramatist on a charger. What offers?

CAPABLE ADMIRAL, good fellow but lacking in tact, requires Secretary to keep him from saying the wrong thing. Must be always at his elbow. Apply, White House.

MANUFACTURER OF ANTIQUES desires new sphere of activity. England preferred. Corots and Constables a speciality. Historic jewelry carefully simulated. Apply, Paris.

CHAIRMAN, LICENSING JUSTICES, would be glad to hear of city where licences may be decimated without arousing comment. Particulars in confidence at Colonial Office.

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY.—In an account of a lecture given at Portsmouth by a lady, on the subject of Miss MARIE CORELLI, the native Press says:—"The lecturer was divided into two parts." But this was not all; for we read lower down that "a vote of thanks to the lecturer brought the evening to a close." One would have supposed that the evening, as far as the lecturer was concerned, had ended with her tragic and violent disruption, and that the subsequent irony would leave her cold.

CLASSIC MOTTO FOR A BOAT-LOAD OF BAD SAILORS DURING A ROUGH CHANNEL PASSAGE (ITALIAN PRONUNCIATION).—"O si sic omnes!"

THE MOTORISTS.

You see them sitting head to head
Like pigeons on the tiles,
Whispering from breakfast-time to bed
Of motor-cars and miles.
You see them all intent, profound,
And rapt enjoyment gleaming
From phrases singular in sound
And mystical in meaning.

First they discuss the car as such,
And fill the listener's ear
With all the virtues of the clutch,
The merits of the gear:
Then one explains the reason why
His sparking plug is better,
And takes occasion to decry
The other's carburetter.

From these momentous points the word
To other things is borne,
That coats should, or should not, be
furred,

That goggles should be worn:
That some new-fashioned cap is just
The wear for doubtful weather,
And that your driving gauntlets must
Be more than dogskin leather.

About this conversational feast
Much anecdote is strown,
Stories of highways unpoliced,
And records overthrown:
When each, Imagination's aid
To grace his tale invoking,
Tells of the famous run he made
To Barnet or to Woking.

At last—with reverence be it told—
To them that favoured are
At last, the coach-house doors unrolled
Reveal the actual car.
It comes, pushed slowly forth by hand,
A process antiquated,
But one to which, I understand,
It is habituated.

Round it the motorists collect
To solemnly admire,
Upon its beauties to reflect,
And stroke its bulging tyre.
Stirred by the sight, with blame or
praise
Their busy tongues begin again,
They gaze and talk, and talk and gaze,
And then they push it in again.

So be it: but when days are fine,
When roads are dry and hard,
These pampered vehicles decline
To leave the stable-yard;
A cog is bent, a valve astray
In some obscure position,
While many, such is humour's way,
Frankly defy ignition.

One horse of old was well content
To pull us through the mud,
While yonder engines represent
A quite extensive stud.
Ten horses: yet, when all is done,
The mournful issues prove

That of them all no single one
Can be induced to move.

Sometimes, when flaws are unforeseen,
The owners puff and blow,
Twisting and tinkering the machine
In hopes to make it go;
But oftener, with a genial calm,
They greet the situation,
And seek the house their souls to balm
With further conversation.

You see them sitting head to head,
And murmuring on for hours,
Talking from breakfast-time to bed
Of different motive powers.
About dynamics, oil or steam,
My ignorance is crass,
But I should certainly esteem
Their motive power as gas.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

(What it may come to.)

COLONEL COURTENAY stepped into the municipal motor omnibus—a halfpenny any distance—somewhat slowly, for he was getting a little stiff from rheumatism and old age, and sat down next to his friend Dr. GOODHART.

"I'm as well as I can expect to be, thank you," said he in answer to the doctor's inquiries, "especially in these hard times. I see they're going to raise the rates again."

"Impossible!" said the other; "why, what are they now? I almost lose count. I think the last were at eighty-five shillings in the pound."

"Eighty-five and ninepence," replied the Colonel, "and now they're going to add another seventeen and tenpence. They say it's to pay the interest on the loan for finishing the Municipal Music-hall and Working Men's Club."

"Very likely," said his friend, "it all comes to the same in the end. We have to pay. Talking of Clubs, do you belong to any now?"

"My dear fellow, what a question to ask! I used to belong to the Rag and several others. By Jove, when I was a subaltern I thought nothing of joining a Club. But my old father paid the rates then, and they were only about three shillings in the pound. Doesn't that sound ridiculous? How could I afford any Club now, with the Income Tax always at half-a-crown and these infernal rates more than five times the assessment of one's house? Only a working man can afford a Club. I wish I'd been a working man."

"I imagine," said the doctor, "that you worked harder than any of these fellows when you were in South Africa, and in those other old campaigns. I wish I could have a six-hours day, with a half day three times a week, and no work on Saturday. When I was able to afford that shabby little brougham I

got through my work in about nine or ten hours, not including night work, but now I'm obliged to walk, or ride in these municipal omnibuses, I can hardly get it in between breakfast and bedtime. However, there's always the Workhouse to retire to, only they do all they can to prevent a middle-class man from going there, because if the middle-class give up in despair there'll be nobody to pay the rates. By the way, did you ever get anything from the Municipal Tailoring Works? This suit came from there. Not bad for half-a-guinea, is it?"

"Of course not, because the difference comes out of the rates. But all the cloth is supplied by contract by one of the aldermen. I bought this great-coat for six-and-sixpence last autumn, and it's turned a different colour every fortnight since. Of course the cloth was dyed in the Municipal Dye Works. It's what they call a fast colour. However, it's good enough for an old soldier. It's only PERKINS, the Mayor, who can afford to cut a dash. Does he do any work for you now?"

"Not he! I've found a much better plumber than he ever was, an engineer come down in the world. The rates have crushed him. He was telling me about the new Workhouse, which has cost nearly a million."

"Why, that's as much as the new Town Hall," interrupted the Colonel.

"Oh, no! That cost a million and a half. But the Workhouse must be gorgeous. All the staircases are marble, there's oak panelling everywhere, and the best furniture from the Municipal Furnishing Stores."

"Ah, then, the chairs will break down under the inmates. I sat on a municipal chair once. All the wood is supplied by contract by one of the aldermen. What's going on here?"

"Oh, they're only tearing up the old electric tramways. They cost the town over a million, blocked all the streets for ten years, and were then given up altogether when these municipal omnibuses were started. These are run at a loss. We've had this one to ourselves all the way. However, the difference comes out of the rates, so the working man doesn't lose."

"Not he! And all the omnibuses are supplied by contract by one of the aldermen. What's that infernal noise? Is the thing going to blow up?"

"Very likely. I shall get out and walk. Good-bye, COURTENAY."

"I shall do the same, though these three-and-sixpenny boots from the Municipal Boot Works hardly keep the wet out after a few weeks, and my municipal umbrella is perfectly rotten. We're all going to the dogs as fast as we can. Good-bye."

PHENOMENAL HEROINISM!

(A Historical Fragment.)

[Under the heading "Fashionable Lady's Daring Innovation," a daily paper recently described, in half a column of wonderment, the apparition in the West End on the previous afternoon of a bonnet with dark green strings tied in a double bow slightly to the left of the chin of a lady most neatly and elegantly dressed, and still obviously and undeniably young; a tiny cluster of spring flowers adorning the "confection."]

The Kalends of April, Anno Domini Nineteen-Hundred-and-Three, was an epoch-making date in the history of the British Empire.

At half-past three o'clock on that afternoon a rumour spread like wild-fire from end to end of the metropolis to the effect that a strange and startling spectacle of a feminine nature was to be observed in Bond Street.

In a few minutes the Tube and suburban lines were blocked with streams of hurrying and perspiring *quidnuncs*; the service of buses had to be trebled and quadrupled on all roads converging to the above-named focus of fashion; extra drafts of police were hastily telephoned for from outlying districts; and by four o'clock the crush was so immense in this particular quarter that all traffic and circulation was impossible.

Things began to look ugly, and the crowd was getting out of hand, when the new Commissioner of Police, Mr. E. RICHARD HENRY, thought it advisable to summon the military. Six Army Corps promptly arrived in as many motors, with Mr. BRODRICK at their head.

By degrees a lane was made to the centre of attraction, after the Riot Act had been read and a volley of blank charge fired.

The cause of the disturbance was then ascertained and located by a picked body, numbering some hundreds, of interviewers and photographers, and led by Mr. *Punch's* own Special Representative at the Seat of War.

It was a BUSTLE of the Early Eighties worn (slightly on the right) by a prepossessing and very self-possessed young lady of some twenty springs.

Such a heroine had not been seen since the days of GRACE DARLING, and special editions recording the progress of the affair were issued until late at night.

All Fashiondom had been rocked to its foundation. Dressmakers were aghast at the audacity of the incident, while their clients, who had just purchased what they supposed to be latest costumes, were in despair.

Further details must be looked for elsewhere, as Mr. *Punch's* young man fainted with emotion on being present at such a portentous scene.



Eccentric Old Gent (whose pet aversion is a dirty child). "GO AWAY, YOU DIRTY GIRL, AND WASH YOUR FACE!"

Indignant Youngster. "YOU GO 'OME, YOU DIRTY OLD MAN, AND DO YER 'AIR!"

CHARIVARIA.

A NEW Field Club for ladies is announced. A feature is to be a special room for pets. We think this differentiation between the members will lead to trouble.

Mr. BRODRICK, who is all thoughtfulness for his recruits, is reported to be about to introduce a much-needed reform. In future our barracks are to have playgrounds attached to them, containing real sand, &c. Our readers will remember that similar enclosures are set aside for children in many of our public parks.

Hospitable Lisbon has been crowded with people embracing in the streets and lifting one another's scarf-pins.

Wonderful things are happening in Ireland. A new era of loyalty is being ushered in. At the Cork Agricultural Show the KING's cattle were loudly cheered.

Since New Year's Day twenty persons have been placed on the Black List at Manchester. All were ladies.

What part of a man is the east end? "Man shot in the East End," as the papers say.

A Cambridge cycle-maker wrote to his sweetheart that he hoped Providence would find a means of separating them. His wish was granted through the agency of the local Court. The fee was just £100.

New by-laws for Bognor have put a penalty of £5 on steam-organ playing. Owners of Locomobiles in the neighbourhood are indignant.

We understand that the authors of *Wisdom While you Wait* are preparing to publish a sequel dealing with the *Times* Competition. Mr. *Punch's* young men are to be congratulated on their enterprise, seeing that the *Times*, like the Poet Laureate and the KAISER, has taken to producing its own imitations of its imitators. One recalls the historic precedent furnished by Miss CISSIE LOFTUS, when she burlesqued Miss LETTY LIND's burlesque of Miss CISSIE LOFTUS's burlesque of Miss LETTY LIND.



EASTER MANŒUVRES.

Adjutant. "YOUR ORDERS ARE THAT WHEN YOU ARE ATTACKED, CAPTAIN SLASHER, YOU ARE TO FALL BACK SLOWLY."

Capt. Slasher. "IN WHICH DIRECTION AM I TO RETIRE, SIR?"

Adjutant. "WELL, THE PROPER WAY, OF COURSE, WOULD BE OVER THAT HILL, BUT—THEY INTEND TO HAVE LUNCH BEHIND THAT FARMHOUSE IN THE VALLEY."

RHYMES OF THE EAST.

ELEGY ON AN INDIAN COMPOUND.

"Where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise."

THE time-gun rolls his nerve-destroying bray;
The toiling moon rides slowly o'er the trees;
The weary diners cast their cares away,
And seek the lawn for coolness and for ease.

Now fade the lessening echoes on the night,
And melancholy silence rules the scene,
Save where the bugler sounds, with conscious might,
And thirsty THOMAS leaves the wet canteen;

Save that from yonder lines in deepest gloom
Th' ambiguous mule does of the stick* bewail,
Whose *dunder* craft forbids him to consume
His comrade's blanket, or his neighbour's tail.

Beneath those jagged tiles, that low-built roof,
(Whose inmost secret deeps let none divine!),
Each to his master's voice supremely proof,
The Aryan Brothers of our household dine.

Let not Presumption mock their joyless pile,
The cold boiled rice, in native butter greased;
Nor scorn, with rising gorge and painful smile,
The cheap but filling flapjacks of the East.

Full many a gem of highest Art-cuisine
Those grim unleavened cakes would overweigh;

* The *dunder-stick*—an ingenious instrument devised to defeat this extraordinary appetite.

Full many a "dish to set before the Queen"

Would lack the substance of that poor display.

Nor you, their lords, expect of these the toil,
When o'er their minds a soft oblivion steals,
And through the long-drawn hookah's pliant coil
They soothe their senses, and digest their meals.

For Knowledge to their ears her ample store,
Rich with the latest news, does then impart,
Whose source, when known, shall chill you to the core,
And freeze the genial cockles of the heart.

For once, to long neglectfulness a prey,
Resentment led me undetected near,
To "know the reason" of this cool delay,
And teach my trusty pluralist to hear.

There to my vassals' ruminating throng,
Some total stranger, seated on a pail,
Perused, translating as he went along,
My private letters by the current Mail.

One moment, horror baulked my strong intent;
Next o'er the compound wall we saw him go,
While dismal shrieks, with deprecation blent,
Deplored the pressing tribute of the toe.

The Moral.

To you, fresh youths, with round, unblushing cheeks,
Some moral tag this closing verse applies;
E'en from the old the voice of Wisdom speaks—
Even the youngest are not always wise!

From Exploration's curious arts refrain,
The alluring fields of Orient lore eschew:
Lest you should learn—nor ever smile again!—
The dubious customs of the mild Hindoo. DUM-DUM.



THE INFANT HERCULES.



PASHLEY'S OPINIONS.—No. IV.

I SHOULD like to tell the story of how I nearly got hooked up the first time when I was quite a young chap. I wasn't a marrying man in those days—not much, and, to tell you the truth, I wasn't much of a one for ladies' society. Of course I used to go about a bit to dances and things of that kind, where you have to meet girls and be polite to them and let them chaff you, but I always felt it wasn't my game.

Of course I was dressed up all right—white tie, patent leather pumps, lavender kids with black backs, and a red silk handkerchief tucked into the opening of my waistcoat in top-up style, so as to look like one of those fellows with a decoration. It gives a tone to the whole rig-out that you can't get in any other way. Young ROGERSON's handkerchief was bright yellow, but I always stuck by red as being in better taste.

But, after all, what can you do at a dance? It's all so cut and dried and conventional that a fellow never gets a chance of distinguishing himself. Everybody's pretty much like everybody else, so far as that goes. You go into the room and you see just the same faces as you saw last week, sitting round the walls like so many peaches waiting to be plucked. You can't go up to a girl as the chaps do in the books, and say, "Maiden, thy father sits revelling in the great hall with his boon companions and trusty knights; thy mother is at her orisons in an upper chamber. The portcullis is down and the moon is hidden. Beyond these castle walls are liberty and love. Wilt fly with me on the steeds that champ their bits at the gate? Or, say, shall we first, to lull their suspicions, tread a stately measure?" (I copied this out of *The Quest of the Morion*, and it seems to be the way they used to talk a good many years ago.)

If you said anything of that sort the girl would only snigger and say, "Lor', Mr. PASHLEY, how you do run on!" and her mother would put you down as dangerous. Instead of that, all a chap can say is, "May I have the pleasure of the third polka with you?" and, after it's over, "May I take you to the refreshments? Lemonade or claret cup?" and then you sit by like a fool while the girl's sipping, and you can't think what the deuce you're going to talk about next, and it's ten to one, if you do try your best, you manage to say the wrong thing. Once, I remember, I thought I'd been going pretty strong with a girl whose name I hadn't caught, and I'd just got to paying her a compliment about a dimple she had in her right cheek—it was something I'd read in a book of poetry about dimples being Cupid's weapons. I forget how it went exactly, but I know simple rhymed with dimple. Well, she blushed a bit and hung her head, so I went on to ask her if I might have the next dance too. She said, "Are you not engaged for that, Mr. PASHLEY?"

"Oh, yes," I said, "but I'll throw her over, of course. It's only an old frump, a fat old married woman, fifty, if she's a day, with great red mottled arms. What on earth a woman like that wants to be dancing for I can't conceive. Her name's CHOLLOP"—I put a lot of sarcasm into the way I pronounced it—"and she's old enough to be your mother."

"She is my mother," said the girl, looking at me like a tiger-cat; and with that she got up and left me sitting with a bit of sponge-cake in my hand. I made tracks jolly soon afterwards. However, that was the sort of thing that was always happening to me at dances. Just when I thought things were going best, I'd manage to get my foot in it and have to sing small. And there was another thing. Mother never liked my dancing. She said no doubt things were different from what they were when she was young;

but she couldn't get over her old Puritan ways, and she was sure that dancing was one of the devil's snares. She seemed pleased to see me dressed up smart, only she warned me not to be led away by social successes, and never to forget that what a man's legs did was nothing; it was what he did with his head that mattered. I took it joking, and said I was sorry I couldn't dance on my head, not being a performing dog; but, as I've said before, mother never did see a joke.

So it came about that after a time I rather gave up dancing, and took to going out to theatres and music-halls with APSLEY and his lot. And that's how I dropped in for the business I meant to tell you about. But I shall have to keep it for another time after all.

A WAR OFFICE ENQUIRY.

SIR, *Mr. Punch*, the following is true.
Peruse my story written in blank verse,
For such a tragic metre seems to me
Peculiarly adapted to the subject.
From earliest years had I been singled out
As one whose talents leaned to feats of arms,
In view of which to Sandhurst I repaired,
Whence, in the second year from my arrival,
Steeped to the eyes in military lore,
I passed with honours.

Straightway did I speed
To the War Office, all agog to learn
The date when I might look to be gazetted.
Quickly arriving, I produced my card,
And to the nearest minion thus: "Good Sir,
In me a budding KITCHENER you see,
Who, at your leisure, would be glad to learn
The date when he may look to be gazetted."
"They'll tell you," quoth the knave, "at M.S. One."
To M.S. One, whatever that might mean,
I turned my steps. And, on arriving, "Sir,
To be succinct, I pant to ascertain
The date when I may look to be gazetted."
"Ah," said the minion blandly, "I should think
Colonel O'MAUSER is the man you want.
He'll give you information on the topic.
Call, therefore, on this noted son of Mars
At Number Thirty-seven, Bayonet Buildings,
Pall Mall."

I thanked him kindly, and departed.
Colonel O'MAUSER, I regret to say,
Was out.

His servant, having heard my errand,
Genially bade me "Ask at M.S. Two."
Bracing myself together (for by now
Faint did I feel with hunger and fatigue),
I called at M.S. Two, to be directed
With some asperity to Cox's Bank,
Where, I was told, I might expect to find
Major DE FORPOINT-SEVENING's address.
He, they surmised, could tell me in a trice
The date when I might look to be gazetted.—
Shrewd man, the Major.

Cox's Bank was shut.
I tried to find him at the Foreign Office
Without success. And when a person there
Gave me instructions, which, I saw, would lead
Once more by devious routes to M.S. One,
I hailed a passing hansom, and returned,
Full of strange oaths, to my ancestral home—
And to this day, for all I've toiled and fretted,
I've no idea *when* I'm to be gazetted.



Old Woman (to young Lady Bountiful). "Yes, Miss, Nellie do grow. She skips out of 'er shoes in no time. 'Er feet are tremendous. I should think a pair of yours would just fit 'er, Miss!"

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

GREVILLE's study of King WILLIAM THE FOURTH leaves little to be desired, whether in sparkling point or graphic fulness. The diarist knew his sovereign intimately, and had what Lord HALSBURY would call "a sort of" contemptuous tolerance of him, contrasting with personal loathing of his predecessor on the throne. In a score of apparently casual entries GREVILLE makes our latest WILLIAM live for all time. He burns into memory his honest bluntness, his indifference to ceremonial, and his passion for after-dinner speaking, in the course of which he was even more than usually incoherent. Born to be the master of a sailing brig, accident of parentage placed him on a throne. Undaunted by this lion in the path, Mr. FITZGERALD MOLLOY has compiled two volumes in memory of *The Sailor King* (HUTCHINSON). As he justly observes, the reign, too remote for personal recollection, too recent for stately history, covers a space in national annals of which comparatively little is known. Mr. MOLLOY bridges it with pleasant chat and extracts obtained from all available sources. His literary style, more especially when he lets himself go, is appalling. Here is the opening sentence of his narrative: "Weary greyness still brooded above the world as just before dawn on June 26, 1830, GEORGE THE FOURTH passed into eternity." My Baronite hastens to say that this maudlin mixture of MACAULAY and milk punch is the result of supreme effort. Mr. MOLLOY, reversing the national practice of saving a trot for the avenue, thought he would start off well. And there you are. When he settles down to plain English he does much better. He has an eye to the picturesque, and has not been sparing of industry in picking out and stringing together choice bits from private and public records. Judiciously he avoids politics, dealing with the personal annals of courtiers, poets, writers, players, wits and women. Of the latter he devotes no less than three chapters to retelling the story of Mrs. NORTON, of whom a photogravure from a drawing by HATYER adorns the second volume. On the other hand the Reverend EDWARD IRVING has two chapters to himself.

A Lad of the O'Friel's, by SEUMAS MACMANUS (ISBISTER), affords a delightful insight into Irish peasant life, by one who knows the Emerald Isle and her people thoroughly. After all, civilisation is less a matter of telephones and gramophones, motor-cars and "advanced women," than a high sense of the difference between right and wrong, courteous manners, and a wonderful resignation under trial. Seen in this light, the men and women depicted by Mr. MACMANUS are in advance, in point of true progress, of many who figure in the great world of wealth and fashion nearer home. What truer lady could we meet than the pure-hearted and pious *Nuala*, the heroine of this charming tale, or where could you find a young fellow with a higher sense of chivalry than *Dinny*, the hero? With many scenes of genuine pathos, *A Lad of the O'Friel's* is enlivened by touches of true Irish wit and humour. In the opinion of my Assistant Reader, therefore, this is a charming book, and one which is sure of lasting fame and popularity.

In *Overdue* (CHATTO AND WINDUS), CLARK RUSSELL gives us another of those fascinating stories of the sea, of which in these days he is "the onlie begetter." In a parenthetical passage in an early chapter he hints at the fact, sadly familiar to his personal friends, that, enchained in the grip of rheumatism, he has long been prisoner in his room. This, my Baronite tells me, happens, by one of the little ironies of life, to be situated in a town as far remote from ocean as the limits of the island permit. This makes more marvellous his power of picturing the sea in its many moods. As you read

you smell the brine, see the great green waves leaping round the ship, or watch the moon illuminating illimitable levels of glistening water. Mr. RUSSELL's word-pictures of the sea convey something of the touch of TURNER's brush, with the advantage that whilst the painter dealt with river and lagoon, the writer deals with the mightier ocean. The *Dealman* goes forth in quest of sunken treasure, but on the long voyage there is no monotony. Mr. RUSSELL always has something turning up, from a belated balloon to a convict ship. There are some stirring scenes when Staten Island is reached. These the gentle reader is invited to study from the book.

Mr. FERGUS HUME's mysterious romance, *The Jade Eye* (JOHN LONG), is so full of murders, burglaries, thefts, surprises, long explanations which leave the reader more puzzled than ever, crafty impersonations by different persons anxious for occult reasons to conceal their individuality and to play at being somebody else, that the Baron owns himself utterly baffled. It begins well, but after a while the perpetual repetition, by everyone in the story, of the words "The Jade Eye" is so irritating, that only a skipper, and he must be a master skipper too, can lightly o'ertop the bales of conversational padding and alight safely on the strong points of the story. To those who like such exercise this book is recommended by the Baron.

Out of the Past (JOHN MURRAY), by the Right Hon. Sir MOUNTSTUART E. GRANT DUFF, G.C.S.I., F.R.S., is the title of two volumes of well-written recollections that date back to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. His criticisms of men from whom he must have differed *toto caelo* seem free from any political or sectarian bias. Altogether a most interesting, as it is a most useful, book.

THE BARON DE B.-W.

APOLOGIA.

(To a Passing, not even Nodding, Acquaintance.)

I STARED at you. No doubt it was a wrong—
Maybe, ungentlemanly—thing to do,
But still I looked, and looking looked for long,
I stared at you.

Apologies, dear lady. If you knew
You must admit my case was pretty strong.
If not to look at, why have eyes so blue,
Set in a face as sweet as sweetest song?
Had you been plain it never had been true
To say that, stopping still amid the throng,
I stared at you.

THE PARTING GUEST.—It was the humorous fancy of a New Brunswick housebreaker to relieve the monotony of prison life by escaping, putting in a brisk spell of burgling at various houses in the neighbourhood, and returning, weighed down with plunder, to his cell once more, where he would hide the night's earnings under the floor. Eventually, however, he foolishly requested the warder one evening not to sit up for him, as he might be late, and this, arousing the official's suspicions, led to his detection. When it was pointed out to him by the Governor that he was giving the prison a bad name, and that, loth as he was to interfere with the pleasure of a guest, this could not go on, he agreed to forego his rambles. The Governor, charmed by his ready acquiescence, courteously offered to provide him with a latch-key, and the episode terminated.

FELICITOUS TITLE FOR A NEW FIRE-PROOF MATERIAL.—Uralite.

THE SIMPLER LIFE.

A YEAR or two ago, when I was still a bachelor, I seemed to be constantly meeting people who wanted to convert me to The Simpler Life. They sent me pamphlets on the subject, and directed my attention to articles upon it in the more expensive magazines.

The seed fell on good ground, and I became a convert. Many bachelors do. Indeed, the advantages of so doing are obvious. The Simpler Life relieves you from the necessity of wearing a frock-coat, or paying afternoon calls, or leaving cards after a dinner party. It is in fact quite an old theory of social behaviour which used to bear a less high-sounding name. It aims at abolishing snobbery and ostentation. Thus, liveried menials are prohibited by it. These I was easily induced to forego. It discountenances formality of all kinds. Hence the disappearance of calls and card-leaving and similar nuisances. In fact, there are quite a number of ordinary social customs and duties on which The Simpler Life looks with disfavour. All these I steadfastly abjured. Indeed, had I remained a bachelor, I am inclined to think I might have achieved a certain pre-eminence as a Simpler Liver.

Instead of this I married.

Now the Simpler Life inevitably tends to make more converts among bachelors than among married men. There is something in the institution of matrimony which is essentially hostile to it. Yet when I married EVELYN it was with the fullest intention of carrying out the precepts of The Simpler Life with conscientious fidelity.

EVELYN herself seemed quite ready to be converted.

"It is beautiful, JOHN, quite beautiful," she would say when I expounded its tenets. "That part about not having servants in livery now. I think that is so right! Because you see, dear, we couldn't possibly afford to have them anyway, could we? So it would be much more comfortable if no one else had them either."

So we were married. The wedding was not quite as simple as I wished—there were twelve bridesmaids and three hundred presents, mostly duplicates—but EVELYN said it would please her mother, so of course I had to give way. And her going-away dress looked beautifully simple. After the wedding we went to Eastbourne for a week, before starting for Italy.

There is an obvious compatibility between Eastbourne and The Simpler Life. And yet it was at Eastbourne that the problem arose which ultimately led to my abandoning its precepts for ever. I remember how a vague feeling that all was not right seized upon me even at Victoria Station, when a young woman of pleasing appearance, carrying a hand-bag, met us upon the platform and buzzed round my wife officiously. But I said nothing. When, however, we alighted at Eastbourne, and the same officious female took



THE RULE OF THE ROAD: AN EASTER MONDAY EXAMPLE.

"I HOPE YOU ARE NOT HURT. BUT IT WAS ENTIRELY YOUR OWN FAULT. WHY DIDN'T YOU DRIVE ON YOUR RIGHT SIDE?"

"WHY, THAT'S JUST WHERE I WAS A-DRIVING! D'YER THINK I DON'T KNOW RIGHT FROM LEFT, MISTER HIGNORANCE!"

possession of my wife's wraps and began to look after the luggage, my suspicion became a certainty. My wife had brought a maid!

Now The Simpler Life distinctly lays it down that the multiplication of servants is a useless and harmful luxury. Under that heading lady's maids would unquestionably be included. I pointed this out to EVELYN as gently as I could. She did not appear to be impressed.

"But that's absurd, dear," she replied calmly. "PARKINS isn't useless at all. On the contrary, PARKINS is invaluable. I simply don't know what I should do without PARKINS. Who would look after my frocks; who would pack and unpack, if I hadn't PARKINS?"

"The Simpler Life says we should do these things for ourselves," I observed gravely.

"But I couldn't possibly do that, dearest," she answered. "I shouldn't know how."

"But you might try," I urged. "Do, EVELYN. Let this

be a turning point in your life. Begin to be Simpler, dearest, from to-day."

"Not to-day, JOHN," she answered firmly. "You mustn't ask me, dear. These things ought never to be done in a hurry. You are always such an impetuous darling. Do let us wait and think it over."

No man can be called "an impetuous darling" by the lady he has just married and remain unmoved. For the moment I was silenced. But I determined to return to the subject.

I did return to it—more than once. EVELYN was very sweet about it. She is wonderfully reasonable when you put things to her sensibly. But she advanced a great many arguments which I had to meet before I could make any impression.

"I'm sure you *could* pack as well as PARKINS if you were willing to try," I said confidently. "You are so clever about everything."

"I *could* of course, dearest," she agreed. "But supposing I had one of my headaches just as we were starting for somewhere? You wouldn't like me to have to pack *then*! And I have such dreadful headaches sometimes."

"If you had a headache I would pack for you," I answered bravely. "You shall teach me."

EVELYN laughed gaily.

"Why, you poor darling," she said, "you don't know how difficult it is. All the skirts have to be folded so that they won't crease, and you have to put tissue paper in all the sleeves to prevent them from being crushed. You'd never manage it."

"Try me!" I answered. "Give PARKINS notice, and when you have a headache or feel tired I'll be your maid."

So we came to an agreement. PARKINS was not to be sent away altogether. EVELYN said that would be hasty. But she was to be given a holiday, and while we were in Italy we would take no maid with us.

I am forced to admit that this arrangement somewhat interfered with my enjoyment of Italy. We moved about a great deal: Milan, Verona, Venice, Ravenna, Florence, Perugia, Assisi, various parts of the Italian lakes were visited in turn. EVELYN seemed anxious that we should see as many different places as possible during the six weeks we were away. And at each of these a vast amount of packing and unpacking had to be done. Moreover, dear EVELYN's luggage did not seem to have been very well designed for The Simpler Life. She had sixteen dresses, as far as I could make out, besides innumerable odds and ends in the way of shoes and stockings and petticoats and blouses and mysterious undergarments. And every one of these had to be unpacked and packed again at every place at which we halted.

"I can't bear living in my boxes," she declared plaintively. "I like everything arranged tidily in drawers. PARKINS always did it."

But that is, I understand, the feminine conception of travel. A man throws a few things into a bag, and when he reaches a halting-place only takes out what he wants for



SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR SPRING MILLINERY.

1. The Motor Hat (very smart).
2. The Basket (very useful).
3. The Frying Pan.
4. The Golf Hat.
5. The Gramophone.
6. The Tambourine.

the night. A woman at once proceeds to empty every trunk she possesses.

Another thing which tended to mar my complete happiness during our tour was the state of EVELYN's health. She appeared to have a quite unfair number of headaches. On arriving at an hotel for the night she seemed perfectly well, and would unpack her five large boxes with enthusiasm. But when, two days later, it was necessary to re-pack them, her health became unaccountably worse, and she would spend the morning with half-closed eyes on the sofa while I performed this task. And though her eyes were half closed they never seemed to close entirely, for she would exclaim at intervals reproachfully, "Do be careful, dear. You are crumpling that skirt dreadfully."

While we were in Italy we stayed at ten different hotels, and during all that time EVELYN only packed once. The result was that the greater part of my days was consumed in folding skirts and putting tissue paper into sleeves.

Once I suggested that it might be possible to leave some of her trunks behind, or at least not to disturb their contents at every halting-place, but on this point she was firm.

"I couldn't do that, dear," she said in a shocked tone; "I should never be able to get the creases out of my things if I left them in my trunks. Besides, it would be slovenly."

Whatever sins may be upon my conscience I can safely assert that on my wedding tour I was *not* slovenly. But I was acting in defence of a principle, and later on EVELYN's health would improve, and she would pack and unpack for herself.

At last the honeymoon came to an end. I packed EVELYN's five trunks for the last time, and we turned our faces homewards. I was worn out with the fatigues of this kind of travel, but I felt that I had gained a moral victory, and when we sat down to dinner on the first evening after our return I ventured to point out this fact to my wife.

"Now, dear, confess," I said, "you really did do quite as well without a maid, didn't you?"

"Well, JOHN," she replied, "it was certainly better than I expected. . . . But it was very expensive!" she added thoughtfully.

"Expensive, my own?" I inquired. "No. No. It was PARKINS who would have been expensive."

"I think not, darling," she answered gently. "It was sweet of you to help me with my packing sometimes"—that was how she put it!—"but I never *could* get you to fold things properly. I have just been looking through my frocks, and they're all utterly ruined. I shall have to go to Madame BLANC for an entire outfit to-morrow."

PARKINS has returned, and EVELYN and I have given up our aspirations after The Simpler Life. Indeed, so rooted is now my distaste for packing that when I next go abroad I shall take a valet.

St. J. H.

COMMON EPIDEMIC ABOUT SPRINGTIME.—Angelina Pectoris.